

over 30,000 people that are killed a year and for those that are injured, not to say how much it would save on our health care costs. We have the laws on the books. We must enforce them, but we need the tools to do so.

THE LADIES OF THE GULF

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, the second lady of the gulf named Rita came across the shore of Texas and Louisiana, howling her winds and bringing her thundering rain this past weekend. Like her sister storm, Katrina, she took aim at the low-lying towns and the energy capital of the world that is located in southeast Texas and southwest Louisiana.

Nine of the 26 refineries in Port Arthur, Texas, alone were shut down. These refineries in and around Port Arthur refine 27 percent of the Nation's gasoline. Sixty percent of the Nation's gasoline is refined from New Orleans to Corpus Christi, Texas. Offshore drilling rigs were also shut down, and the start-up time is still undetermined.

Being a target in the hurricane alley, these refineries and oil rigs are vulnerable to nature. That is one reason why the United States must explore opening up new oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico, off the coast of Florida, off the coast of California.

This is a national security issue; and we must, with proper environmental safeguards, drill in these areas so that the energy does not cease because of the anger of the ladies of the gulf.

POLITICAL APPOINTEES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GILCHREST). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFazio. Mr. Speaker, words that will be remembered for a long time, unless the White House can erase them: "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." That was the President to Michael Brown, the political appointee head of FEMA, while people were drowning in New Orleans and in the southeast. The President was apparently unaware of the lack of assistance being provided by FEMA. Mr. Brown was shortly thereafter sent back to Washington and then resigned.

That might be good if it was an isolated instance. Unfortunately, it is not. This permeates the entire 3,000 so-called plum jobs that the President gets to appoint without any regard to qualification.

I mean, Mr. Brown's predecessor was the President's campaign manager who downgraded, demeaned, and ultimately submerged a previously very functional agency, FEMA, into the Homeland Security bureaucracy. Since then, many of the top people have left, and the agency has become totally demor-

alized, although we do find with new focus in the last week. Hopefully, that will last.

Just about the same time that Mr. Brown was going down, the government's top procurement official, that is the person in charge of all purchasing by the Federal Government, \$300 billion a year of taxpayers' money, a gentleman by the name of Safavian, was being led off in handcuffs by the FBI, but not before he had let out a few more billion dollars in no-bid contracts to the usual suspects in the wake of the Katrina disaster.

He has been found to have not only perjured himself but has taken illegal gratuities and bribes from the now-infamous lobbyist Mr. Abramoff. That was the top procurement official appointed by George Bush.

Beyond that, he also, of course, like Mr. Brown, had no qualifications for the job. He once had interned as a law student, helping in some minor way on a helicopter purchase at the Pentagon, and he jumped from there to his political associations with the President, to being head of all purchasing for the Federal Government.

Basically, we have here a government run by people who disrespect government. They do not like government. They do not believe in government. Their spiritual mentor, Mr. Norquist, says he wants government so small that he can strangle it in a bathtub. We find out that people drown when government starts to get kind of small because government is not there to respond. Now they are backpeddling and they are trying to pretend, oh, that is not really what it is all about, but it has been.

Incompetence threads through so many agencies, conflict of interest, and there might be other things. The one thing they do respect government for is its ability to extract money from all the working people of the United States of America and put it in a place, the Federal Treasury, that they can raid to benefit a very few people and major corporations. Government is a profit center is the way they see it, and they have a wonderful revolving door.

They have a fellow over at the FDA in charge of reviewing medical safety, 33 years old, who is a former columnist in The Wall Street Journal, stock analyst, right-wing think tank guru, attacking the FDA who is not supposed to be in charge of new drug approvals; but when a few very potentially profitable drugs did not get approved, he, as the Assistant Secretary, started leaning on the bureaucrats, the professionals, to say why do you disapprove that drug. Pfizer is going to make \$1 billion a year on it; it is a great drug. So what if a couple of people died? They probably would have died anyway.

So there is another fellow, Mr. Gottlieb, yet another outstanding appointment. Unfortunately, the government is rife with these people. There are too many to document, and what they are

engaged in is the systematic looting of the Treasury of the United States to benefit a few, to make government less functional so it cannot serve the needs of the many in times of need, like Katrina, or even in less routine times of need, like education, health care, border control.

They have got a beauty here. They have got a woman they want to put in charge of the border control of the United States of America who even the Republican Senators have questioned whether or not she has any capability, a woman named Julie Myers, another political hack. Ohio Republican Senator GEORGE VOINOVICH said he would really like to hear from Mr. Chertoff, the head of Homeland Security, come spend a little time with us, tell us personally why he thinks she is qualified for the job, because based on the résumé, I do not think you are. That is a Republican Senator. This is the woman who would be charged with keeping terrorists out of the United States of America, and that is a dysfunctional bureaucracy and has been for a long time.

That is new to the administration, but it is more essential today than ever. We need to clean house at this administration, put competent people in charge so government is there when the American people need it and stop looting the Treasury.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to speak out of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

IRAQ AND THE MARCH IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, Cindy Sheehan, who was arrested yesterday for simply exercising her constitutional right to freedom of speech outside the White House, has awoken a